



Arizona Ombudsman-Citizens' Aide

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September 17, 2008

Members of the Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Governor

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 41-1376, I have the honor of submitting my annual report on the performance of our office during 2007.

Our job is to help citizens resolve problems with state government agencies by investigating their complaints, providing informal assistance, and coaching them on how best to advocate for themselves. Our *mission statement* is:

To improve the effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness of state government by receiving public complaints, investigating the administrative acts of state agencies and, when warranted, recommending a fair and appropriate remedy.

This is our twelfth annual report and we hope it paints a picture of what our office does for the people of Arizona. As in previous reports, we have included a generous sampling of the kinds of problems that citizens bring to us and how we responded to them. We have also presented information that statute directs us to provide to the legislature, governor and public.

This is the first report in which we have included information about the Public Access Ombudsman. This program started in January 2007 and is a huge success. The program has two parts. The first involves educating public officials about their responsibilities under the open meeting and public records laws. We have published educational materials, posted information on our website, sent information to hundreds of public bodies, and conducted numerous training sessions throughout the state.

The second part of our public access program involves responding to individual complaints and inquiries. In 2007, about 54% of our inquiries came from citizens, about 9% from the news media and 37% from public bodies themselves. I'm really glad that public bodies are contacting us for advice before they make a decision, instead of making a mistake and waiting for a citizen to bring a complaint to us.

We hope you find this report useful and informative. Please contact us if you have any questions or comments. We welcome the opportunity to sit down and discuss our program with you.

We could also use your help in spreading the word about the services we offer. If you know of someone who could use our help, please let us know so we can contact him or her.

Pat Shannahan
Ombudsman-Citizens' Aide

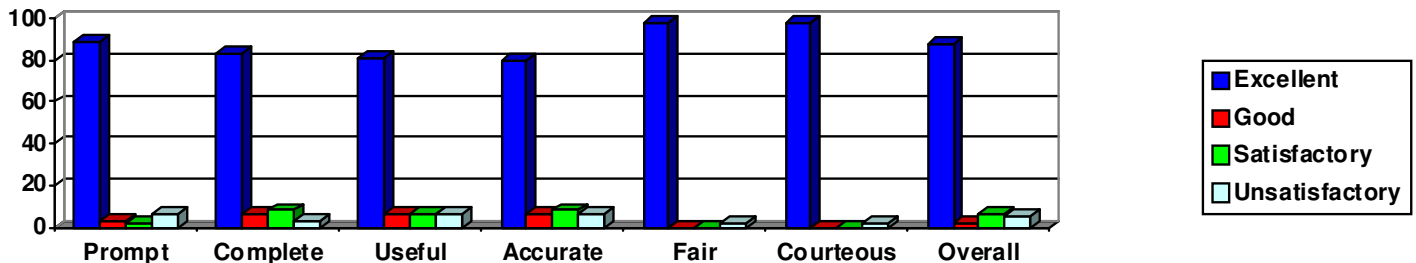
Customer Satisfaction Survey

It is important for us to receive feedback from the citizens we help so that we can evaluate our performance, correct shortcomings and improve our service. One way we get feedback is through our customer satisfaction survey. The survey measures how well we are accomplishing six standards that we developed in our strategic plan. These standards are:

- Respond **promptly** to citizen inquiries.
- Provide as **complete** a response as possible.
- Provide **useful** solutions to citizens.
- Provide **accurate** response to citizen complaints.
- Treat everyone **fairly**.
- Treat everyone **with courtesy and respect**.

The following chart and comments summarize the results of the survey for calendar year 2007:

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results -- Percent



Selected Survey Comments From the Past Year

Without the help Carmen gave me, I would have lost everything I own. I am very thankful, more than words can express.

Finally, an office that is responsible to us, and just one phone call away. No more shuffle from place to place and person to person.

You were the most helpful person I found in government.

Wish I had spoken to Joanne last year. It probably would have been resolved back then.

My claim would not be resolved if it weren't for the diligence of Ms. MacDonnell. She is a great asset to your office, and has exceptional skills at understanding clients' needs. Her promptness and courtesy went a long way in easing the stress of my situation.

Liz Hill was Great!! She quickly mediated my problem and helped me get public info from an uncooperative police station.

I had a case with Therasia a while back and wanted to thank her for her professionalism and assistance. I was at my wits end with a state board and she went the extra mile to help me. She even called me to follow up and appeared genuinely concerned.

Elizabeth Hill did an excellent job concerning open meeting issues in Apache County.

I cannot believe how excellent the service I received was. A problem that was ongoing for over a year was solved in one day. Thank you.

Great service. Problem was resolved in two days. I had been stonewalled by DES for 3 months with no resolution close. Thanks.

The Ombudsman completed and gave me answers in a week. I was unable to find out on my own in 3 months. Thank You.

If only dealing with CPS while I cared for 3 teens had been a third as easy or pleasant. Thank you for your assistance.

This is a wonderful help for people. Everyone was interested in my problem. Thanks again.

You have been an enormous help to me. And I will be using your services in the future.

Thank you. Arizona had refused to pay us back until you contacted them.

My grandchildren and I are extremely grateful and relieved to know someone actually follows up on the public concerns.

Fast results, with good explanation of why situation happened. The outcome was that my family has a Merry Christmas. Thank You.

You took care of my problem.

How We Help People

We provide a unique service to citizens because we are an objective place where they can complain when they think their government has treated them unfairly. The first thing we do is listen to the person's complaint. For some people this is the first time they feel that anyone in government actually listened to them. We then respond in the most appropriate way. We group responses onto three categories:

1. Coaching. Quite often, people come to us with problems they could handle themselves, if only they knew how. We try to help these folks by giving them the tools they need to go out and be their own advocate. Coaching includes:

- ✓ defining issues and rights,
- ✓ identifying options and interests,
- ✓ referring people to the right administrator;
- ✓ explaining agency policies and processes,
- ✓ identifying and researching information, and
- ✓ developing reasonable expectations.

Coaching is the starting point for all our cases and may be enough to give citizens the information and confidence they need to address their problems on their own.

2. Informal Assistance. Sometimes coaching isn't enough and people need a helping hand. Most complaints are the result of miscommunication, a simple mistake, or a glitch that caused the normal administrative process to break down. We try to resolve these problems as quickly and informally as possible. We may call an agency on the citizen's behalf, facilitate a meeting between the parties, or coordinate an action between agencies. Assistance focuses on solving the problem, instead of assigning blame.

3. Investigation. Some complaints are more serious and don't lend themselves to informal techniques. When the nature of the complaint warrants, we conduct an investigation. If we believe the complaint is justified, we work with the parties to try to reach an appropriate solution. Although we have no authority to compel an agency to follow our recommendations, most administrators are more than willing to resolve a legitimate problem once we bring it to their attention. If the complaint is not justified, we go back to the complainant and explain what we found and why we believe the agency acted appropriately. If necessary, we write a report of our findings and recommendations and send it to the agency, legislature, governor, public, and/or attorney general, as appropriate.

Sometimes the problem only impacts one person. In those instances, we can fix the problem for that individual and move on to other complaints. In other cases, however, there may be a fault in the system that caused this problem to happen. Unless we correct the system, this same problem could happen to someone else. When we see a systemic problem, we try to address it by making recommendations to the agency, or perhaps by suggesting a change in statute.

Examples of How We Help People

We want to give you a sense of how our efforts translate into actual results. The following case summaries are taken from the 3,366 cases we completed in 2007.

Sometimes our cases result in a change to statute.

20063336. The owner of a nursing training program complained that the Private Postsecondary Education Board's (PPEB) requirement that she submit to licensure was unreasonable because she was already licensed by the Nursing Board (NB). We investigated the case and substantiated the allegation.

We found the PPEB and the NB regulated the same program activities using different standards. The policies and requirements of the two Boards overlapped, forcing the nursing programs to go through the regulatory approval process twice. Our research showed that both Boards could more effectively regulate the nursing programs if each Board approved/regulated different components of the nursing program. This would eliminate duplication and reduce the hardship of complying with two Boards.

We recommended that the PPEB and NB change their policies to reflect a more fair and effective regulatory process. Since they would not do this, we recommended that the legislature change statute to prevent this duplication. As a result, the state legislature passed SB1431 which gave the Nursing Board sole jurisdiction over these programs.

Sometimes our cases result in a change to agency policies and procedures.

702143. A motorist complained that the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) did not recognize his daughter as being an emancipated minor after he proved that she was married.

We contacted MVD and reviewed their policy. We discovered that according to statute, a married minor should be considered emancipated. However, the table that MVD distributed to supervisors said that only a court order could emancipate a minor. MVD corrected the mistake by adding "marriage" to the table and distributing the correction to supervisors.

701507 and 701582. An accountant complained that the Department of Revenue (DOR) refund letters, and some other correspondence, were confusing. The accountant also believed DOR mailed payroll tax information to businesses too late. He said the notices did not give businesses enough time to complete their internal accounting procedures before tax deadlines. The accountant thought DOR should adopt the Federal timing standard because the Federal notices are distributed to the public one or

two months earlier than the State notices. The accountant said he complained to DOR through the years, but nothing seems to be changed.

We reviewed the documents and suggestions and contacted the Department of Revenue. We explained the problem and forwarded the documentation.

DOR said they were in the process of changing their system to match the Federal system in some areas and would consider making more changes as a result of the accountant's suggestions.

The Department also reviewed the wording of the refund letter and made changes. The accountant was pleased his suggestions were implemented.

20063133. A non-custodial father had a problem with the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE). He had recently been arrested in Virginia and told us the arrest was because of a misleading child-support letter from DCSE in Arizona.

We investigated the case and found that DCSE sent Virginia a letter stating they "could not locate" the father, which, in part, led Virginia to issue a warrant for his arrest for back child support.

Our investigation revealed that DCSE had not previously attempted to contact the father, even though their letter stated that they could not find him. The phrase "could not locate" implies that they had attempted to locate the man and he had fled.

DCSE told us that "could not locate" phrase was included in all closure letters for cases involving another state, regardless of whether they had actually tried to locate the person. We recommended DCSE remove the phrase and replace it with a more accurate and straightforward phrase so that other states wouldn't think the person was a fugitive. DCSE agreed to change their closure letters for all subsequent inter-state cases.

700310. A driver alleged the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) was taking too long to investigate his case. He was mad that an uninsured driver rear-ended him and MVD could not quickly get the insurance information to him.

We contacted MVD and they confirmed their original process for this situation was problematic. They created an expedited process to give existing MVD information directly to citizens involved in accidents. Citizens can use this preliminary information to start their insurance claim process. Later, if the facts about the driver were called into question, a more involved, comprehensive investigation would be required. That updating process would also confirm information is current for the MVD computer system. The MVD staff contacted the complainant directly, gave him this information and answered his other questions.

Sometimes we work with other states to resolve a problem.

702885. Last year, when a motorist moved to Arizona from New York, the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) required him to turn-in the New York license plates when he registered his wife's car. MVD also told him that they would return the plates to New York. However, MVD did not send the plates back and New York suspended the wife's license for failure to register the car. They also put her suspension on the National Driver Registry of suspended or revoked licenses. Since the wife was on this national database, Arizona also suspended her license.

The first step in solving the problem was to make sure New York knew that the family had already turned-in the plates to Arizona MVD. Once that was cleared up, we thought the problem was solved, but it wasn't. Arizona still refused to issue her a license because her name was in the national database.

New York offered to issue a letter of clearance to Arizona MVD so the wife could get her license right away. However, staff at MVD told the man that the letter of clearance was not sufficient and that the information had to come directly from the National Driver Registry.

We contacted the MVD Director's Office again and they said that the man was given incorrect information. They gave us a fax number of where New York could send the letter of clearance. New York MVD then sent the letter of clearance to Arizona MVD, they changed the license status in their computer and the wife got her license.

702206. A son requested assistance obtaining a copy of his father's death certificate from the Arizona Office of Vital Records. The son learned that his deceased father had unclaimed property in Arizona. However, in order for the son to claim the property he needed to prove his father had passed away. His father passed away in 1978 and the son could not locate a death certificate. The man was sure his father passed away in Arizona but the Office of Vital Records could not find a death certificate that matched that name and date of death.

After thorough research by the Office of Vital Records, Maricopa County and our office we concluded that the man's father actually died in Queens, New York, not Arizona. We assisted the man by contacting the appropriate agency in New York to facilitate his request. Once he got the certificate, the Department of Revenue released the unclaimed property.

Sometimes we resolve a problem that an agency has not been able resolve internally.

700828. A man complained that the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) was mistakenly mailing him notices of unpaid child support every year for the past four

years. The notices were addressed to a man who had the same first and last name, but a different middle initial and a different social security number. The complainant said he tried to correct the problem every year, and each year, DCSE assured him they eliminated the problem. Despite these assurances, the letters kept coming.

We contacted DCSE. We found out that the situation was due to a technical problem that was beyond any caseworkers' individual ability to remedy. DCSE believed the problem originated when an earlier caseworker initiated a computer-based search for a non-custodial parent with the same name. This search probably stemmed from an enforcement action or a request for other DES services. From that point forward, the computer system at DCSE incorrectly bundled the two records.

DCSE sent the problem to their computer staff who determined that a programming glitch was causing it. The technical staff found the faulty programming segments, but it took several months to get the revised programming completed and tested. We kept monitoring the situation until DCSE finished correcting the computer problem and stopped sending notices to the man.

700150. A podiatrist believed he was being unfairly punished by the Podiatry Board (Board). He also complained that disciplinary actions taken against several current/former Board members were not recorded in their files. The Board opened its own investigation into the missing disciplinary records and hired a private investigator to assist. The investigator did find some evidence of missing records, but the Board was not able to make a final decision and closed the investigation.

We investigated both allegations. Although we did not substantiate the unfair punishment allegation, we did substantiate the allegation regarding the missing disciplinary records. We found documentation, including Board minutes, describing the disciplinary actions taken against the board members. This information was not found in their licensee files as required by statute. We recommended that the Board place copies of the Board minutes describing the disciplinary actions in the current/former Board member's licensee files. The Board agreed to our findings and implemented our recommendation.

702179. A father who was a noncustodial parent was upset because he thought the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) lost his records for the years 1993 and 1994. The father said he sent copies of the records six times, but claimed DCSE lost those records each time. The man tried sending the records certified by the Post Office and by Fed Ex, but nothing came of it. He said DCSE staff simply kept asking him to resend the material.

We contacted DCSE and they made an exhaustive search of their files. In addition to confirming that they found the father's documents, the search also found a letter from the mother (custodial parent) asking DCSE to close the case. DCSE originally received this closing request in 2005, but they failed to act on it. DCSE recorded the letter and immediately set up the case for closure.

Sometimes we find that actual practice is not in accordance with the agency's stated policy/procedure.

701194. A DES Benefits and Medical Eligibility client, and mother of seven children, was upset that DES staff had not finished processing her renewal application for medical benefits, even though they had received the completed application over a month previously.

The mother was concerned because one of her sons ran out of an important medication and AHCCCS would not authorize the prescription refill until DES finished processing the application. The mother had contacted both AHCCCS and DES staff, but the problem remained unresolved.

We called DES and noted they had exceeded the statutory timeframe for processing an application. We asked them to move this case to the front of the line because they had exceeded the mandated timeframe and there was an acute medical need.

DES said it would still take a few days to finish the processing, but their review of the documentation convinced them the mother's application would be approved. We gave DES the name of the mother's pharmacy and they called in an authorization for an emergency prescription which resolved the crisis until they finished processing the packet.

702583. A social worker who worked for a child crisis center phoned to see if we could help a distraught babysitter. The babysitter was watching a three-year-old child who complained to the sitter that his father beat him. The boy showed the black and blue marks to the sitter, who called Tempe Police.

When the police came to the sitter's home, they called a local Child Protective Services (CPS) office to ask CPS caseworkers to take the child into custody. The local CPS worker refused to come to the property saying they would do a home study later because they did not have anywhere to put the child.

We called the program manager who told us it is not their policy to say they are too full when police call. They said it would be wrong for any caseworker to have made such a statement if police asked for intervention.

We got the crisis center worker and CPS manager talking directly to each other and the manager saw to it that the child was safeguarded and a CPS case opened. CPS management took appropriate steps to ensure that the caseworker did not repeat this mistake.

702380. A motorist complained that the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) would not issue her a driver's license. She said that Arizona has an agreement with Germany that allows her to exchange her German Driver's License for an Arizona Driver's License without taking any written or driving exams. The staff at the local office told her different.

We contacted the MVD Director's Office and they indicated that the complainant was correct. They contacted the local office and made an appointment for her later that week. They also made sure the new employee was made aware of the correct law. We contacted the complainant and she was very happy and pleased with our service.

700520. Two taxpayers complained that the Department of Revenue (DOR) continued to correspond with them as if they were still in business. They told us that they notified the DOR they were going out of business a year previously, but that DOR had not updated its records and would not acknowledge that they no longer owned the business.

We contacted the DOR and they indicated, after reviewing the record, that a staff member entered 2026 as the year the business was to close instead of 2006. They corrected the problem by changing it to the correct year and the taxpayers should not be receiving any more correspondence for the business.

We contacted the complainant and they were happy to report that DOR contacted them and explained the error.

702287. A foster mother was upset that a Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworker blamed her that foster children in her care met with their birth mother. The birth mother did not have permission to have contact with the children at that time.

The foster mother explained that one of her assignments was to take the children to visit their natural grandmother. On one of these visits the grandmother took the children to church where they encountered their birth mother.

The foster mother said the caseworker was also mad that she took the kids to the hospital to see the mother and their newborn sibling. The foster mother said this was despite her receiving pre-approval to take the kids to the hospital to visit the mom and the infant. The foster mother was most upset that the caseworker yelled at her in front of the children.

We contacted CPS management and they looked into her complaints. They said it was inappropriate for the caseworker to have reprimanded the foster parent in public for any reason. The CPS supervisors met with the employee to ensure the employee was aware of why her behavior was not appropriate. They also reported to us that they conducted a group meeting and the offending worker apologized to the foster mother. CPS and the foster family set up protocols for the future.

701104. A man called complaining about Department of Economic Security-Unemployment Insurance (DES-UI). He indicated that due to an error that staff made they did not give him all of the money due to him. DES-UI was now telling him that his time was up and that he could no longer receive benefits. He believed this was incorrect and wanted the receive money due to him.

After reviewing the file, DES-UI agreed with us that they made a mistake. DES immediately released a check for \$2,734. We contacted the complainant and he was happy about the outcome, but was unhappy with the staff that caused this problem in the first place. He was thankful for our help.

Sometimes we simply correct a mistake or make sure that government agencies treat our fellow citizens the way we all should be treated by our government.

702337. An elderly woman was having problems with the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) when she re-registered her car on ServiceAZ.com. After waiting a month and not receiving her registration, she called MVD. MVD informed her that it was in the mail and she should have it in the next couple of days. Ten days later she still had not received her registration and called MVD. After being on hold for over 25 minutes, the call terminated before she was able to speak to a live person.

We contacted MVD and they issued a no fee replacement and sent it the following workday. We apologized that she had such a hard time re-registering her vehicle and confirmed that the woman got her registration.

701583. A lady was upset that her wait time was so long on DES - Unemployment Insurance telephone systems. She said effectively, they never answered her call. She would often get busy signals when calling the DES designated number. Sometimes, she would get recordings saying that the current wait time ranged from 240 minutes (four hours) to 653 minutes (almost eleven hours).

We got more details from the complainant and then we contacted DES. We informed DES that their phone system was giving out illogical answers via the automated system. It is one thing to state wait times, but the system was misinforming the public by saying DES staff would be responding around the clock.

DES acknowledged their phone system was overloaded, but they had no idea it was giving out such long times or implying that DES staff members were working day and night. DES alerted their technical staff and corrected the automated systems. DES also contacted the lady complainant and got the information necessary to process her claim.

We informed the complainant about the repairs to the telephone system and confirmed DES Unemployment followed through on her claim.

700081. A state senator's office contacted us about a constituent who was ill and struggling with her unemployment claim. The complainant was in the midst of protesting a Department of Economic Security (DES) unemployment determination. Since her critical medications were running out in February, she asked if the previously scheduled phone hearing could be moved up to January. The woman had not been able to get through to DES.

We contacted DES and explained the pressing nature of the problem. They contacted the judge and the judge told DES he would contact the employer and ask if the employer was willing to waive their 10-day notice right.

We gave the complainant a status report and gave her some interim ideas to help ease her situation. We recommended the ailing woman consider contacting the Free Medicine Foundation and her drug manufacturers to see if they will help her get free or discount drugs while she was waiting for the unemployment determination. We provided her with these entities' contact information. We told the woman it sound like she would qualify for other DES services too. We suggested the woman look into the AHCCCS medical program now that she was not able to work.

A short time later, the judge got word from the employer that the employer was willing to waive their 10-day notice right. Therefore, the judge agreed to set an earlier hearing date. The woman was very happy her hearing was moved up.

701120. A man called complaining about Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE). He told us that the Custodial Parent (CP) signed a waiver of support and a waiver of arrears about 2 years ago and the case should have been closed. He found out that the case was still open when DCSE froze his bank accounts and threatened to take his income tax refunds. He informed us that recently the custodial parent again signed a waiver of arrears and a waiver of support. He wanted to know why DCSE was still taking arrears.

We contacted DCSE and, after review, they acknowledged that they made a mistake. They immediately faxed a notice to release the levy and any fees associated with it to the financial institution and cancelled the income tax intercept.

We contacted the complainant and he indicated that his accounts were back, but he was still very unhappy that this happened to him. He thanked us for our help, because they corrected it as soon as possible.

Public Access Program

In 2006, in an effort to increase government awareness and provide the citizens of Arizona an effective and efficient means to get answers and resolve public access disputes, the Arizona State Legislature passed legislation effective January 1, 2007, authorizing the Ombudsman-Citizens' Aide Office to hire two Assistant Ombudsmen to provide free services to citizens, public officials, and governmental agencies and help untangle the public access web. This report will outline some of the milestones of the public access program during its first year.

ACTION PLAN

Liz Hill, Assistant Ombudsman for Public Access came aboard on February 5, 2007. One of the first tasks was to develop a plan of action. The plan included the following: issuing a press release; expanding the Ombudsman's website; reaching out to state, county, and local government entities, their attorneys, and various organizations; developing training materials, publishing open meeting law and public records law booklets; and compiling a point of contact directory for public access. By December, we accomplished these goals.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Press release

On February 21, 2007, we issued a press release publicizing the new program. Liz has also been interviewed and quoted by several reporters for a variety of newspapers.

Educational Materials

In April, the first set of open meeting law and public records law booklets were printed. The publications include a message from Pat Shannahan, Arizona Ombudsman, the applicable statutes, the applicable chapter of the Arizona Agency Handbook, recent development to the public access laws providing statutory changes, recent court decisions, and new Attorney General Opinions related to open meetings and public records since the Arizona Agency Handbook's last revision in 2001, and a copy of A.R.S section 41-1376.01 setting forth the additional powers, duties, and expanded jurisdiction of the Arizona Ombudsman for matters relating to public access.

We updated and reprinted the booklets during the summer and again in September 2007. The most current version includes the 2007 legislation. They may be found on our website at http://azleg.gov/ombudsman/Public_Records_Book.pdf and http://azleg.gov/ombudsman/Open_Meeting_Book.pdf.

In addition, Liz submits questions and answers to the Arizona Newspaper Association for publication its newsletter.

Letters of Introduction

On May 2, 2007, we mailed the booklets and a letter of introduction to over three hundred state agency heads, county attorneys, city and town attorneys, and various organizations. Since then we have provided 2162 public record booklets and 2279 open meeting law booklets to various agencies, boards, and commissions throughout the State of Arizona. There is an obvious interest and need for this information and Liz continues to receive calls requesting publications. Liz has also personally met with numerous public officials and department heads to discuss her role and has made presentations at several seminars.

Website

We have revised our website to reflect the Ombudsman's expanded jurisdiction and our role investigating complaints and providing education in matters related to public access. We have also expanded the website to include new sections for public records and open meetings including: an overview of Arizona's open meeting law and public records law, the applicable statutes, upcoming presentations, links to relevant publications, web links to open meeting law information, public records information, and public record request forms for many of the public bodies throughout Arizona, recent developments, and frequently asked questions.

Trainings

Liz has created training materials and provided six open meeting law trainings and five public records law trainings and during 2007. She has seven trainings already scheduled for 2008, some of which have already reached maximum capacity and have waiting lists.

INQUIRIES AND INVESTIGATIONS

During 2007 we received 368 inquiries regarding matters related to public access. Of those calls, 257 (70 percent) were public record inquires and 111 (30 percent) were open meeting inquiries. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the number of inquires received from the public, the media, and government agencies. Table 2 provides the number of inquiries received about state agencies, county agencies, city or town agencies, school districts, and other local jurisdictions.

Table 1

	Public Inquiries	Media Inquiries	Government Agency Inquiries
Number of inquires	198 (54%)	32 (9%)	138 (37%)

Table 2

	State Agencies	County Agencies	City or town agencies	School Districts	Other Local Jurisdictions
Number of inquires	104	45	146	49	24

Of the 368 inquiries, 338 constituted coaching and assistance and 30 resulted in an investigation. While most matters were resolved informally, three recently resulted in a preliminary report and are still pending.

SAMPLE CASES

701796. A Cave Creek resident had problems obtaining a public record from the Town of Cave Creek. On May 31, 2007, she submitted a written request to review the permit file for a local business. The Building Safety Department responded stating that no permits had been processed for that business. A few days later, she received an e-mail from the Planning Department stating that the business in question filed for permits in August 2006. It had been twenty days and she had received nothing.

On June 19, 2007, she called for assistance. I called the town clerk. She agreed to look into the matter. On June 21, 2007, the Town of Cave Creek provided the permit file for inspection.

700897. A Journalism student at University of Arizona was assigned to obtain database information from a government agency. She decided to request a copy of a database from the Tucson Police Department. She wanted to obtain a copy of the portion of a database that recorded each auto theft during the time period of January 2003 through December 2006.

After getting the run around for more than two weeks, she received a copy of an excel spreadsheet, but it did not include the make and model of the car. When she asked for a report that included that information she was given a list of the top ten cars stolen by month and year. Basically, the list she received was information that she could have printed off the Tucson Police Department's website.

When she called to clarify her request, she was forwarded to a supervisor. She and the supervisor exchanged e-mails regarding her request and eventually she was told that the police department was denying her request under the Federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). When she asked how FOIA precluded disclosure of the records she was requesting, she was told to get a lawyer.

At that point she called our office. I too received the run around for several days. The persons involved were at best uncooperative. Finally, I contacted the police department's legal advisor and she successfully obtained and provided the requester with an electronic copy of the portion of the database requested.

7001143. An Arizona resident and homeowner (Homeowner) had a problem with the Arizona Registrar of Contractors (ROC). In a letter dated April 3, 2007, to the ROC, Homeowner requested complaint forms and any attachments that were part of the initial complaint, from homeowners, against a specific home builder during a specific period of

time. Homeowner included the name of the builder, its license number, the range of dates, and a check not to exceed forty dollars to cover any copying charges.

On April 11, 2007, the ROC sent Homeowner a letter requesting clarification and indicating that there were more than 2537 pages that responded to the request and that the cost would be at least \$634.25. Upon review of the request for records, it was my opinion that the request was very clear and very specific. I contacted the ROC in an attempt to understand the confusion as to what was being requested. The ROC provided an explanation for its apparent confusion. I confirmed with Homeowner that my understanding of what was requested was correct and conveyed that information to the ROC.

At that point, things started to move along. The ROC collected the relevant documentation and sent it to Homeowner on May 7, 2007. In the end, the request produced 135 pages of records, for a cost of \$33.75, significantly less than originally estimated.

702340. A reporter was denied access to a booking photo. An investigative reporter for Channel 5 requested a booking photo of a former news reporter from three years ago. The Sheriff's Office denied the request contending that a current court order prohibited the release of the photo because the former reporter was a potential witness in an ongoing trial. The court order, however, merely prohibited extra judicial comments to the media. It did not prohibit the release of an unrelated public record.

I contacted the Sheriff's Office and it was agreed that they would ask the County's attorney to bring this matter to the judge to determine whether the photo was within the scope of the court order. The court determined that it was not. The Sheriff's Office released the photo that afternoon.

2007 Annual Report for CPS

The role of the Assistant Ombudsman for Child Protective Services is to help people who are having a problem with the state agency that serves to protect children. Our office is contacted by parents, grandparents and other family members as well as foster parents and service providers. The help we provide to our callers includes coaching, informal assistance and formal investigations.

Many of the coaching and assistance calls that we receive are easily rectified by partnering with our points of contact within Child Protective Services. A phone call or e-mail can clear up complaints regarding assignment of case worker and office, obtaining copies of case plans, failure to receive notification of staff meetings, Foster Care Review Board meetings and court hearings, and clarification of policies and procedures.

In the last several years the Department of Children, Youth and Families has begun to look at the process of maintaining a child's connection to their birth family while in custody. This initiative is supported by the following processes within the agency; the Team Decision Making meeting (TDM), the Family Group Decision Making meeting (FGDM), and the Child and Family Team Meeting (CFT). Each of these meetings allow for the inclusion of relatives, community members, friends and neighbors. The Office of Licensing, Certification and Regulation, who licenses the state's foster care and group homes, purchased a new curriculum that embraced this philosophy. The ten week program promotes the idea of continued contact by the parents, relatives, family friends and neighbors with children who are placed in out of home care. This contact could be written, verbal or in person depending upon individual circumstances. The philosophy was embraced by Child Protective Services and their staff received training on this subject. The idea is to have everyone understand and promote the importance of family connections and the bonds that children have within their neighborhoods and communities.

When children are removed from their parents or guardians Child Protective Services looks to placing that child in an alternative setting that is safe and appropriate. Most often this can be accomplished by placing the child in the home of a relative, friend or neighbor. In order to put the child such a placement, a criminal background check and home inspection are required. If a relative or friend can not care for them then the children are placed in a licensed foster or group home.

One of the inquiries that we investigated this year involved a complaint from a paternal grandfather that CPS did not conduct a thorough criminal background check on a spouse when placing the child in the home. The grandfather stated that his grandson had been allowed to reside in the home of his maternal grandmother and her husband when the child was unable to be in the custody of his parents. The grandfather stated that the case worker did not obtain the criminal history on the spouse which would have shown that he failed to register as a sex-offender.

A quick review of the Arizona court records online provided us with verification of what the grandfather had reported. We substantiated the complaint because CPS did not follow their policy and procedures and did not conduct a criminal background check on a possible placement.

When we contacted CPS, they agreed that the case worker had relied on the self-disclosure of the parties involved instead of conducting a criminal background check, as required. After becoming aware of the issue, the case worker moved the child to another relative home and a thorough and complete criminal investigation and home inspection was completed on that person.

At times, Child Protective Services and the Court determine that relative placement is not the best option for a child. The reasons for this decision may be due to a medical, mental health or behavioral health concern. In addition CPS must look at the relationship that the child had with the relative, friend or neighbor prior to removal, as well as the person's previous involvement with the child. Finally, CPS looks at the length of time in care, who has been providing that care, and if there is a bond and attachment. If a child has been with a foster family for several years and the foster family wants to adopt the child, that placement might be better for the child than moving him or her to an aunt that the child has never seen.

The following case illustrates that point. Late this year our office investigated a complaint that was made by a great aunt who stated that CPS had not considered her for placement of her niece and nephew. The great aunt was concerned that the siblings would not be placed together and would lose their contact with one another. The great aunt was currently providing care for the eldest sibling and wanted the other two siblings also placed with her.

Our review of the case noted that when the children were first removed from the care of their mother, they were placed in the homes of relatives. However this was not a stable placement. Due to the children's extensive needs and behavioral issues, the relatives requested that CPS remove the children.

At the time, the great aunt sought to be a placement resource. The record indicates that CPS did initiate a home study on the great aunt for the three children in 2005. However, due to her living arrangements CPS determined that placement would not be appropriate. However, nearly two years later the great aunt's circumstances had changed and she once again requested to have the children placed with her. As a result, CPS placed the eldest sibling in her care in June of 2007.

CPS did not seek to place the second sibling with the aunt because severance of parental rights had already occurred and the foster parents had filed a petition for adoption with the court. The agency felt that it would be detrimental to remove the child from her foster home, where she had lived for several years, and place her with the great aunt, whom she had not been in contact with previously.

The agency also decided that it was not in the third child's best interest to be placed in the home with his sibling and great aunt. They noted that the oldest child had a history of sexual molestation of his brother and they felt that it would pose a danger to the younger child to be living in the same home. The agency had sought out the recommendation of the child's therapist who supported the agency in not allowing the siblings to be placed together.

Our office did not substantiate the Aunt's allegations because CPS considered the best interest's of the child. A decision like that has a huge impact on a child and it is never easy to make. Each family is different and the decision is always somewhat subjective. Nevertheless, using the standard of best interests of the child, consulting with counselors and professionals, and having decisions reviewed by the courts usually results in the better solution. A policy of always placing with a relative sometimes doesn't work.

An issue that Child Protective Services may be addressing more in the future is the placement of U.S. born children with family members who are not in this country legally. The issue poses a question of the legality and safety of these children and their overall welfare. The concern would be that once the children are placed in their custody, what becomes of the child if the relative is deported? Does the child return to state custody or do they return to the country of origin of their relative?

We were contacted by a foster care provider who had these very concerns regarding the two children that were in her home. She was concerned that CPS was seeking a guardianship with a great aunt of the two children who was not in the United States legally. The foster mother voiced her worries that if she was deported by immigration what would happen to the children. The children are U.S. citizens and therefore are not subject to deportation.

The case record shows that CPS entered into a legal guardianship with the great aunt under the approval of the courts. The agency has made a contingency plan, an alternative care provider, for the children should the relative be deported to her country of origin. We determined that the agency was aware of the concern presented by the foster care provider and had taken steps to address those matters.

CPS has continued to be open to changes in policy and procedures this past year. The agency approved changes in their client grievance form and the time frames in which they respond to such. This came about following the completion of an investigation by this office in 2007 which involved a complainant's grievance not being addressed by CPS in a timely manner.

In addition CPS implemented a new and improved safety risk assessment tool to their field staff. We encourage the agency to continually work on improving the way in which they conduct thorough and complete investigations.

CONTACTS BY AGENCY

Agency	Coaching	Assistance	Investigation	Total
Accountancy Board	1	0	0	1
Administration, Department of	14	10	2	26
Administrative Hearings, Office of	6	0	0	6
Agriculture, Department of	2	1	0	3
AHCCCS	30	45	3	78
Apache	0	2	0	2
Apache County Planning and Zoning Board	0	0	1	1
Apache County Sheriff's Office	1	0	0	1
Apache Junction	1	1	0	2
Apache Junction Police Department	3	2	0	5
Appraisal, Arizona Board of	0	3	1	4
Arizona Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing	1	0	0	1
Arizona Criminal Justice Commission	1	0	0	1
Arizona Fire District Association Area 32	1	0	0	1
Arizona Office for Americans w/ Disabilities	1	0	0	1
Arizona State University Police Department	2	0	0	2
Arizona Western College	1	0	0	1
Arts, Arizona Commission on	1	0	0	1
Attorney General, Office of	30	12	0	42
Auditor General	1	0	0	1
Avra Fire District	1	0	0	1
Avra Valley Fire Department	1	0	0	1
Ball Charter Schools	1	0	0	1
Beaver Creek School District	1	0	0	1
Behavioral Health Examiners, State Board of	20	13	1	34
Bisbee Unified School District	0	1	0	1
Boxing Commission	2	1	0	3
Buckeye Police Department	0	1	0	1
Bullhead City	1	1	0	2
Camp Verde	1	0	0	1
Camp Verde School District	2	0	0	2
Camp Verde Unified School District	0	1	0	1
Cave Creek	1	2	0	3
Chandler	2	1	0	3
Chandler City Clerk	1	0	0	1
Chandler Police Department	0	1	1	2
Charter Schools, Arizona State Board of	1	0	1	2
Chiropractic Examiners, State Board of	3	1	1	5
Citizen Transit Oversight Committee	1	0	0	1
City of Maricopa	6	1	0	7
Clarkdale	3	0	0	3
Coconino County Health Department	0	1	0	1
Coconino County Public Defender's Office	1	0	0	1
Commerce, Department of	2	0	0	2
Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing	2	0	0	2
Compensation Fund	1	6	0	7
Concho Fire Department	0	1	0	1
Congress	7	0	0	7
Congress Elementary School District	5	2	1	8
Corporation Commission	29	5	1	35

Corrections, Department of	25	5	1	31
Cosmetology, Board of	5	4	0	9
Cottonwood	2	0	0	2
Deer Valley Unified School District	0	0	1	1
Dental Examiners, Board of	12	5	6	23
DES - Aging & Community Services	116	5	1	122
DES - Benefits and Medical Eligibility	46	105	4	155
DES - Child Protective Services	324	197	46	567
DES - Child Support Enforcement	26	138	5	169
DES - Children and Family Services	3	3	0	6
DES - Developmental Disabilities	13	14	4	31
DES - Employment and Rehabilitation	12	30	0	42
DES - Other	16	14	0	30
DES- Adult Protective Services	4	2	0	6
Developmental Disabilities Council	1	0	0	1
Dewey	1	0	0	1
Dewey-Humbolt Town Council	2	0	0	2
Discovery Plus Academy	1	0	0	1
Eagle College Preparatory	3	1	0	4
Early Childhood Development & Health Board	1	0	0	1
E-cademie High School	1	0	0	1
Education, Department of	16	6	0	22
Environmental Quality, Department of	6	3	1	10
Equalization, State Board of	1	0	0	1
Executive Clemency, Board of	1	0	0	1
Financial Institutions, Arizona Department of	12	3	0	15
Fingerprinting, Board of	1	14	1	16
Fire Building and Life Safety, Department of	18	3	2	23
Flagstaff	1	0	0	1
Flagstaff City Attorney's Office	1	0	0	1
Flagstaff City Clerk	1	0	0	1
Flood Control District of Maricopa County	1	0	0	1
Ft. Mohave Fire District	1	0	0	1
Funeral Directors & Embalmers, State Board of	0	1	2	3
Game and Fish, Department of	2	1	0	3
Gaming, Department of	0	1	1	2
Gilbert	1	0	0	1
Gilbert Police Department	1	0	0	1
Gilbert Unified Elementary School District	1	0	0	1
Glendale	2	0	0	2
Glendale Union High School District	1	0	0	1
Goodyear	1	0	0	1
Government Information Technology Agency	1	0	0	1
Governor, Office of	10	1	0	11
Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities	4	0	0	4
Health Services, Department of	72	9	1	82
Health Services, Vital Records Office	10	6	0	16
Hearing Impaired Council for the	1	0	1	2
Holbrook	1	0	1	2
Homeowners Associations	2	0	0	2
Housing, Department of	4	1	0	5
Industrial Commission	42	11	0	53
Insurance, Department of	14	6	0	20

Intelli-School	1	0	0	1
Judicial Advisory Selection Comm. of Surprise, AZ	1	0	0	1
Judicial Conduct, Commission on	10	0	0	10
Kingman	5	0	0	5
Kingman Police Department	0	0	1	1
La Paz	1	0	0	1
Lake Havasu City	1	0	0	1
Lake Havasu City Attorney's Office	2	0	0	2
Lakeside Police Department	0	1	0	1
Land, Department of	6	1	0	7
Legislature	53	8	0	61
Liberty High School	1	0	0	1
Library, Archive & Records Dept.	3	1	0	4
Liquor Licenses and Control, Department of	3	3	0	6
Lottery	1	1	0	2
Manufactured Housing, Office of	2	0	0	2
Marana	1	0	0	1
Maricopa	1	1	0	2
Maricopa City Council	1	0	0	1
Maricopa Clerk of the Board	0	0	1	1
Maricopa Community Colleges	0	1	0	1
Maricopa County - Risk Management	0	0	1	1
Maricopa County Assessor	0	1	0	1
Maricopa County Attorney	1	1	0	2
Maricopa County Hospital District	1	1	0	2
Maricopa County Sheriff	2	1	2	5
Maricopa County Superior Court	1	0	0	1
Massage Therapy, State Board of	1	1	1	3
Medical Board, Arizona	29	15	1	45
Mesa	3	2	0	5
Mesa City Council	1	0	0	1
Mesa Municipal Court	1	0	0	1
Mesa Parks and Recreation	1	0	0	1
Mine Inspector	4	0	0	4
Mingus Mountain Academy	1	0	0	1
Mobile Gardens Water Improvement District	1	0	0	1
Naturopathic Physicians Board of Medical Examiners	1	1	0	2
Navajo County Superior Court	1	0	0	1
New Magma Irrigation and Drainage District	1	0	0	1
Northland Preparatory Academy	1	0	1	2
Nursing Care Institution Administrators & Assisted Living Managers Examiners Board	1	1	0	2
Nursing, State Board of	12	9	4	25
Occupational Therapy Examiners, Board of	1	0	0	1
Ombudsman	80	5	0	85
Optometry, State Board of	6	3	0	9
Oro Valley	1	0	0	1
Osteopathic Examiners in Medicine and Surgery, Board of	4	1	1	6
Other - Government	396	16	0	412
Other - Private	280	8	0	288
Parker Police Department	0	0	1	1
Parks, Department of	1	1	0	2
Payson Fire Department	1	0	0	1

Peoria Municipal Court	1	0	0	1
Peoria Unified School District	4	2	2	8
Personnel Board	3	1	0	4
Pharmacy, Board	3	1	0	4
Phoenix	4	0	0	4
Physical Therapy Examiners, Board of	0	1	0	1
Picture Rocks Fire Department	1	0	0	1
Pima	1	0	1	2
Pima Association of Governments	3	0	0	3
Pima Community College	2	0	0	2
Pima County Attorney's Office	2	0	0	2
Pima County Juvenile Court	1	0	0	1
Pima County Sheriff's office	0	0	1	1
Pinal	1	0	0	1
Pinal County Adult Probation Department	1	0	0	1
Pinal County Human Resources Department	0	1	0	1
Pinal County Juvenile Court Services	1	0	0	1
Pinetop-Lakeside	1	0	0	1
Pioneers Home	1	0	0	1
Podiatry Examiners, State Board of	2	3	1	6
Postsecondary Education, Arizona Commission for	1	1	0	2
Prescott	1	0	0	1
Private Post-Secondary Education, Board for	2	1	0	3
Psychologist Examiners, State Board of	6	0	0	6
Public Safety Personnel Retirement System	1	1	0	2
Public Safety, Department of	6	5	1	12
Racing, Department of	5	5	1	11
Radiation Regulatory Agency	2	0	0	2
Real Estate, Department of	11	10	1	22
Regents, Arizona Board of	2	0	0	2
Registrar of Contractors	19	29	1	49
Respiratory Care Examiners, Board of	0	1	0	1
Retirement System, Arizona State	7	27	3	37
Revenue, Department of	26	22	3	51
Sahuarita	1	0	0	1
San Pedro Water District	1	0	0	1
Santa Clara District Attorney	1	0	0	1
Santa Cruz Regional School District	0	0	2	2
Scottsdale	3	2	0	5
Scottsdale Police Department	1	0	0	1
Secretary of State, Office of	4	4	0	8
Sedona	1	0	0	1
Show Low Municipal Court	1	0	0	1
Show Low Planning and Zoning	1	0	0	1
Show Low Police Department	3	2	0	5
Sierra Vista	1	0	0	1
Springerville	1	0	0	1
Star Valley	2	0	0	2
Structural Pest Control Commission	1	1	0	2
Superior	1	0	0	1
Supreme Court	2	0	0	2
Surprise	1	0	0	1
Surprise City Council	4	0	1	5

Surprise City Court	2	0	0	2
Surprise Police Department	8	0	0	8
Technical Registration, Board of	3	0	1	4
Tempe	1	0	0	1
Tempe City Attorney's Office	3	0	0	3
Tempe Police Department	1	0	0	1
Tempe Union High School District	1	0	0	1
Tourism, Office of	2	0	0	2
Town of Chino Valley	0	0	1	1
Transportation, Department of	9	6	1	16
Transportation-Motor Vehicle Division	28	71	2	101
Tribal police	1	0	0	1
Tucson	1	1	0	2
Tucson City Clerk's Office	3	0	0	3
Tucson Police Department	0	2	0	2
Tucson Unified School District	3	0	0	3
University of Arizona	4	1	0	5
unknown	2	0	0	2
unknown charter school	2	0	0	2
unknown city	2	0	0	2
unknown fire district	1	0	0	1
unknown local jurisdiction	1	0	0	1
unknown school district	2	1	0	3
US Bankruptcy Court	1	0	0	1
Various Charter Schools	1	0	0	1
Veterans Home	1	0	0	1
Veterans' Services, Department of	2	4	0	6
Veterinary Medical Examining Board	8	1	2	11
Voices for Education	1	0	0	1
Water Resources, Department of	4	1	0	5
Weights and Measures, Department of	2	0	1	3
Williamson Valley Fire District	1	0	0	1
Yavapai	4	0	0	4
Yavapai County Community College	1	0	0	1
Yavapai County Courthouse	1	0	0	1
Yuma	0	1	0	1
Yuma City	5	0	5	10
Yuma City Attorney's Office	1	0	0	1
Yuma County Public Defender	2	2	0	4
Yuma Police Department	0	2	0	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTACTS	2228	1000	138	3366

REQUESTS FOR INVESTIGATION

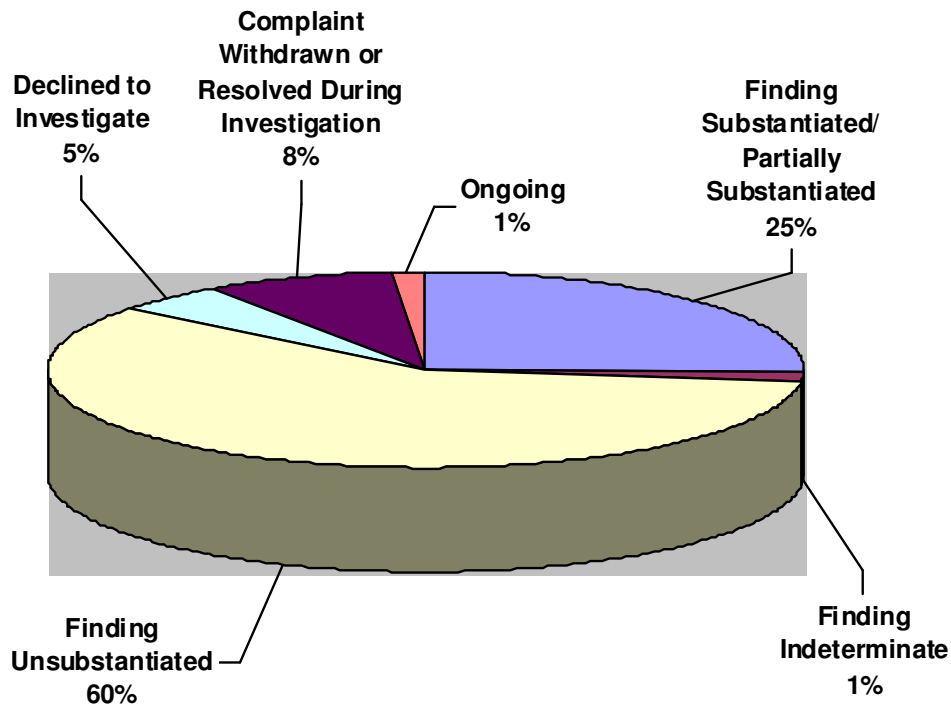
Declined*	7
Complaint withdrawn or resolved during investigation	11
Investigation completed	118
Ongoing	2
TOTAL REQUESTS FOR INVESTIGATION	138

* The Ombudsman-Citizens' Aide has the statutory authority to decline to investigate a complaint if there is another adequate remedy available; the complaint relates to a matter that is outside the duties of the ombudsman-citizens aide; the complaint relates to an administrative act that the complainant has had knowledge of for an unreasonable time period; the complainant does not have a sufficient personal interest in the subject matter of the complaint; the complaint is trivial or made in bad faith; or the resources of the office of ombudsman-citizens aide are insufficient to adequately investigate the complaint.

INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

SUPPORTED/PARTIALLY SUPPORTED		35
Requires further consideration by agency	8	
Other action by agency required	17	
Referred to the legislature for further action	0	
Action was arbitrary or capricious	0	
Action was abuse of discretion	1	
Administrative act requires modification/cancellation	4	
Action was not according to law	3	
Reasons for administrative act required	0	
Statute or Rule requires amendment	2	
Insufficient or no grounds for administrative act	0	
INDETERMINATE		2
NOT SUPPORTED		81
TOTAL INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS		118

Results of Investigations



- Finding Substantiated/Partially Substantiated
- Finding Indeterminate
- Finding Unsubstantiated
- Declined to Investigate
- Complaint Withdrawn or Resolved During Investigation
- Ongoing

The Ombudsman and Staff

Patrick Shannahan, Ombudsman-Citizens' Aide. Pat was appointed Arizona's first Ombudsman-Citizens' Aide on July 1, 1996. He is a former military officer with extensive experience in management, problem solving, strategic planning, and negotiation. Pat's last military assignment was with the Joint Chiefs of Staff where he participated in international arms control negotiations, represented the Joint Chiefs at interagency working groups and helped formulate national security policy. Pat has completed the mediation training program presented by the Attorney General's Office and investigator training through the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation. He has a bachelor's degree from Arizona State University, a master's degree from Webster University and was a research fellow at the National Defense University in Washington DC. He is active in the United States Ombudsman Association and the Arizona State University Alumni Association.

Joanne C. MacDonnell - Deputy Ombudsman. Joanne joined the office in 2005 after serving nearly eight years as the Director of the Corporations Division at the Arizona Corporation Commission. She has experience in management, human resources, problem resolution, customer service, strategic planning and process analysis. Joanne was an active member of the International Association of Commercial Administrators (IACA). Prior to working in government, Joanne worked in the private sector, serving on the Board of Directors and as a division accountant for FCC Investors, Inc. She also worked in real estate as a licensed realtor associate and appraiser. Joanne has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Arizona in Business Administration & Real Estate. Joanne has been trained and certified as an investigator by the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR). She has completed additional training including the Executive Course, procurement, ethics and various risk management courses through Arizona Government University (AZGU); the Leadership Module through Rio Salado College and AZGU; Mediation Training through South Mountain Community College; EEOC training through the Governor's Office of Equal Opportunity and the Phoenix EEOC; and ombudsman training prescribed by the US Ombudsman Association (USOA). Joanne is a notary. She is active in the United States Ombudsman Association.

Carmen Salas, Assistant Ombudsman. Carmen joined the Ombudsman's office in 2005. She previously worked at the Arizona Corporation Commission for nine years. For three of those years she was the Supervisor in the Corporations Division's Annual Reports Section. For the last two years she was the Management Analyst for the division. Carmen has experience in customer service, process analysis and problem resolution. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from the University of Phoenix in October 2005. She has completed additional training including ethics, leadership and various risk management courses through Arizona Government University. She has also completed Ombudsman training sponsored by

The United States Ombudsman Association, and basic investigator certification through the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation. Carmen is fluent in Spanish.

Therasia Roland, Assistant Ombudsman. Therasia joined the Ombudsman's office in 2006. She has a master's degree in Social Work from Arizona State University, and a bachelor's degree in Psychology from McKendree College in Lebanon, Illinois. During her graduate study, she served as an intern with DES Division of Aging and Community Services and worked with the Arizona Department of Health, Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Nutrition Services. She has also served as a Compliance Principal for AIG financial group and managed a vocational rehabilitation program for Goodwill Industries.

Linda Stiles, Assistant Ombudsman. Linda rejoined the office in January 2008 after having served four years as the Executive Director for the Arizona Optometric Association and Arizona Clean and Beautiful, a non-profit association. In addition, she served ten years with the Governor's Office and on contract to various state agencies and private businesses. At the Governor's Office, she held several positions geared toward improving the lives of Arizona's citizens, including serving as the director of the Governor's Office of Community and Family Programs, the Governor's Division for Children, the Office of Constituent Services, and as special assistant for Appointments to Boards and Commissions. Linda completed mediation training through Hy-View Mediation Services and Ombudsman training through the United States Ombudsman Association. In addition, she completed the Basic Regulatory Investigator Course. She is a University of Arizona graduate.

Kara VanHise - Assistant Ombudsman for Child Protective Services. Kara joined the office in 2007 after serving for nearly 3 years as a program supervisor for foster care with Catholic Community Services. Prior to this Kara worked for five and a half years as a Child Protective Services specialist for the State of Arizona. Kara has also worked for the Salvation Army providing case management services to homeless individuals and families. She has a bachelor's degree in sociology from Portland State University. In addition to her work for the Ombudsman - Citizens' Aide office Kara participates as a member of the State Citizen Review Panel on child fatalities, the Court Improvement Project and the Children's Action Alliance Child Welfare Committee.